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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran. By A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON, Professor of Indo-Iranian Languages in Columbia University. (New York: Columbia University Press; the Macmillan Co. 1899. Pp. xxiii, 314.)

AMONG the world's religious teachers Zoroaster deservedly holds so high a place that all those interested in the comparative study of religion are naturally eager to learn as much as possible of this great reformer's life. But the subject is one of much difficulty, and such divergent views have been held as to the details of the teacher's career which tradition has handed down to us, that the non-professional student has been often sadly at a loss in the past, as to what to accept and what to reject of the mass of material presented to him. But scholars have kept busily at work, and, as Professor Jackson points out in his preface, "our knowledge of Zoroaster has been greatly augmented from the traditional side, during the past few years, especially through the translations made by Dr. West from the Pahlavi texts. This mass of Zoroastrian patristic literature tends largely to substantiate much that was formerly regarded as somewhat legendary or uncertain. This has resulted in placing actual tradition on a much firmer basis and in making Zoroaster seem a more real and living personage." In view of these facts such a careful study as this of the life of Zoroaster will be warmly welcomed by all students, professional and non-professional, who wish to learn the judgment of a scholar of the first rank on various disputed points connected with the subject.

Professor Jackson has divided his book into two parts, in the first of which (pp. 1-144) he states the general results of his investigations, and in the second of which (pp. 145-294) he gives a critical discussion of some of the main questions touched on at earlier points in the book. This is an excellent arrangement, since it allows the student or general reader to get a comprehensive view of the prophet's career without confusing his mind with a multiplicity of details or of opinions, frequently conflicting. Should, however, more detailed information be desired than is given in the first part of the book, the full table of contents, the foot-notes and the excellent index will enable any one to find very readily in the critical appendixes what the author has to say on any given point.

Before giving an outline of Zoroaster's life as told by Professor Jackson, it may be well to have our author's statement of his own opinion on the basal question "whether Zoroaster be a historical personage, a real figure whose individuality is indelibly stamped upon the religion of Persia

of old." This is his answer to this question (p. 3): "An affirmative answer must be given, for Zoroaster *is* a historical character. This point is emphasized because it is not so long ago that advanced scholarship for a time cast a cloud over the subject, but happily the veil of myth is now dispelled. Scholars are generally agreed that although legend or fable may have gathered about the name of the prophet of ancient Iran, the figure of the great reformer, nevertheless, stands out clearly enough to be recognized in its general outlines; and sufficient data for his life can be collected to enable one to give a clear and correct idea of his personality and individuality."

Zoroaster was born in western Iran, it would seem, about the middle of the seventh century B. C. Tradition has woven many marvellous tales about the story of his birth and early years, tales such as may be found in every religious literature. At the age of fifteen the prophet attains his majority, and assumes the "Kusti," or sacred thread. "From his fifteenth year to the age of thirty the tradition is more meagre in its details. The period is a time not so much of action as it is a time of religious preparation." At least part of this time was spent in retirement from the world. "This time of early retirement and seclusion must have been the period in which Zoroaster fought out the fight which waged in his own bosom and in which he began to solve the problem of life, the enigma of the world, and the question of belief, as his religion solved it. Here he doubtless began also to promulgate the first general truths out of which his religious system was evolved" (p. 35).

"At the age of thirty comes the divine light of revelation, and Zoroaster enters upon the true pathway of the faith. It is in this year that the archangel of good thought, Vohu Manah, appears unto Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) in a vision and leads his soul in holy trance into the presence of God, Ahura Mazda. The year of this first inspired revelation is known in the Pahlavi texts as 'the year of the Religion.' . . . During the ten years that followed this apocalyptic vision, Zoroaster has seven different conferences with Ahura Mazda and the six Amesha Spentas." By means of these various visions the revelation is completed. Then, like other religious leaders, Zoroaster has to pass through the ordeal of temptation by evil spirits, only to emerge triumphant from this searching test.

It was not till the end of this period of ten years—"years of wandering and struggle, of hope and dejection, of trial and temporary despair"—that he won his first convert. "This zealous adherent is his own cousin Maidhyōi-maōnha (Pahlavi Mētyō-māh), who is often mentioned in the Avesta and other writings. He is a very different character from Buddha's traitorous and schismatic cousin Devadatta, and he stands as the St. John of Zoroastrianism. Finally, in the twelfth year of the Religion, Kavi Vishtāspa (Pahlavi Kaī Vishtāsp, Modern Persian Gushtāsp) is converted and becomes the Constantine of the Faith—the Rājā Bimbisāra, if not the Asoka, of Buddhism. After the King adopts the Creed, many conversions follow, and the Prophet's own family, relatives and

friends are frequently referred to in the Avesta and elsewhere as having become faithful adherents and believers."

The court soon followed the King's example, and "the Religion" gradually spread over Vishtāspa's realm. Not only are conversions made in this land, not only are some Turanian converts mentioned, but tradition has stories to tell of Hindus, and even of Greeks, who embraced the new faith.

But "the Religion" was not to spread without conflict, and with the great religious wars which we read of in the Avesta we reach a crucial point in the history of Zoroastrianism. There seem to have been two of these wars, the first having broken out, according to tradition, some seventeen years after Vishtāspa's conversion. The great opponent of Vishtāspa and of "the Religion" was Arejat-aspa, or Arjāsp. Fierce battles were fought, and though victory ultimately rested with the "true" believers, it was purchased at great cost. The greatest loss sustained by the followers of Zoroaster was the death of the prophet himself, which occurred possibly at the beginning of the second war. Tradition is so unanimous that Zoroaster died a violent death in the seventy-seventh year of his age, that we may probably accept its accuracy. But while later Iranian writers state that his death took place at the storming of Balkh early in the second religious war, we cannot be sure that they are exact in their information, although it is possible that they are.

With the final overthrow of Arjāsp began a period of rapid progress for "the Religion," a progress which met its first great check at the invasion of Alexander.

Such is a very bare outline of the story of Zoroaster's life, as told in the first part of Professor Jackson's book. The second part of the work is given up to seven critical appendixes entitled, respectively, as follows: Suggested Explanations of Zoroaster's Name; On the Date of Zoroaster; Dr. West's Tables of Zoroastrian Chronology; Zoroaster's Native Place and the Scene of his Ministry; Classical Passages mentioning Zoroaster's Name; Allusions to Zoroaster in various other older Literatures; Notes on Sculptures supposed to represent Zoroaster.

The list of books connected with the subject (pp. xi-xv), and the beautiful map of Persia and Afghanistan by Keith Johnston, with its key, are both valuable additions to the work.

This life of Zoroaster is an admirable piece of work, and both the author and all those interested in the subject are to be congratulated on the publication of this beautiful volume in which is told so well the story of the Prophet of Ancient Iran.

J. R. JEWETT.

Papias and His Contemporaries. By EDWARD H. HALL. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1899. Pp. 318.)

OUR author starts out bravely. He tells us that Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, is the first living personality "after the Apostle